

**TRIBUTES TO**  
**Godfrey Roger Pisek, M.D., Sc.D.**

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**BY**

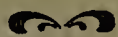
**DR. FREDERIC BRUSH**

**Formerly Superintendent of the New York Post-  
Graduate Medical School and Hospital**

**and**

**DR. S. ADOLPHUS KNOPF**

**Formerly Professor of Phthisiotherapy of the  
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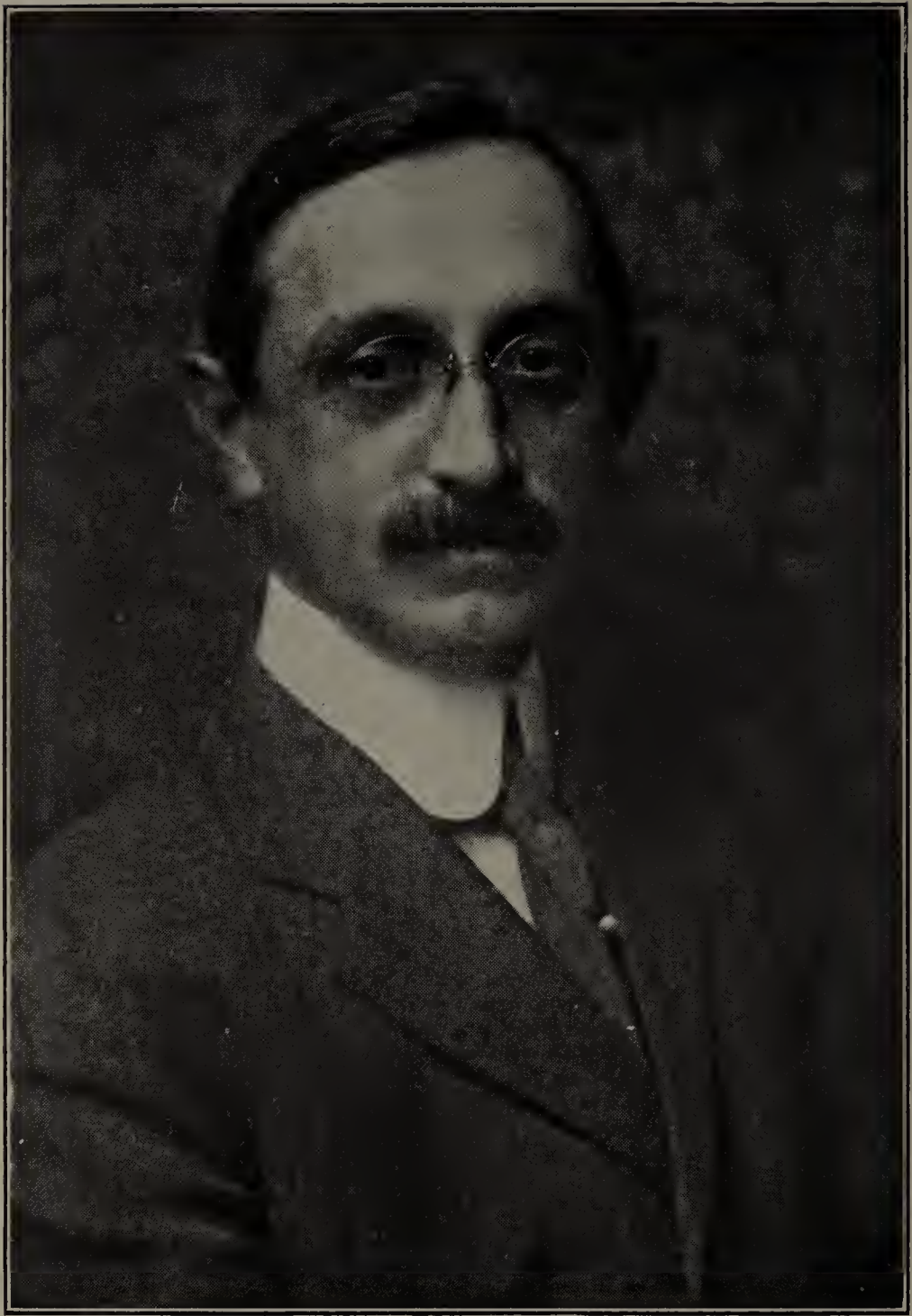
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Godfrey R Pisek



## TRIBUTES TO GODFREY ROGER PISEK, M. D., Sc. D.

In the death of Godfrey Roger Pisek, the American medical profession has lost one of its most distinguished members. He died suddenly from heart disease on January 19, 1921. An impressive memorial meeting was held in honor of Dr. Pisek on the afternoon of Tuesday, January 25th, at the New York Post-Graduate Medical School and Hospital. The meeting had been arranged by the Faculty Association and was in charge of Dr. John J. Moorhead, a lifelong friend of Dr. Pisek. Dr. Ellice M. Alger presided. The Rev. Frederick E. Stockwell made an inspiring prayer. Dr. James F. McKernon, the president of the faculty, spoke briefly of the great loss the school had sustained by the death of Dr. Pisek, and Dr. Knopf and Dr. Brush paid their tributes to the departed friend.

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### THE SPIRIT OF GODFREY PISEK.

BY

DR. FREDERIC BRUSH,

Formerly Superintendent of the New York Post-Graduate Medical School and Hospital.

It was the spirit, the light of Godfrey Pisek that made us love and follow him—and made this meeting inevitable. The hour is too weighted with deep feeling and with generous meanings to be much taken, it would seem, in enumeration of public and official achievements, notable as they were in his forty-eight years. He was educated in the schools of New York, graduated from New York University with B. S. degree and from New York University Med-

ical School, coming upon the House Staff of the Post-Graduate Hospital as substitute in 1896, and by regular appointment in 1897. Advancement was steady and to high places. In Medicine he was paramount as a teacher, and gave the body of his working hours to this, attaining early to such positions as—Professor of Pediatrics in the University of Vermont, Pediatricist or Consultant to many of the better hospitals and children's homes in this vicinity—Memberships in City, National and International Societies, scientific, civic and social, in which he frequently held high and onerous office. He advanced steadily thru all phases of the children's work at the Post-Graduate into the Directorship of the Pediatric Department—consummating twenty-five years of faithful service, distinctive leadership and at times brilliant organization and pioneering.

The Post-Graduate was Dr. Pisek's motive home, his real alma-mater nourishing mother; he has left one of the deepest single marks yet upon this institution and its societies and associations; here he rooted and grew—and dropped down here at the end of a morning of fresh, unselfish planning for her—in a smiling vision of the warmer, truer up-town home he was going to.

Yet how this list of accomplishments, which could be far extended, fails to satisfy this gathering. Even a stranger listening in would justly crave some more intimate

portrayal of the man—Pisek (for so we called him, ever in best way, and shall). Thru these enwreathing public and official distinguishments we press in then to know, while yet we may, the core-fibres of the man—the secrets of our friend's so high success with a little life.

A while ago I was brooding upon the future of our so-called civilization—the trends of the race, within conceivable time; and came out, as have others, upon a person with dominant head carrying luminous wide eyes, that glanced pregnant messages to and from the higher developed brain. A swift play of special senses beyond our ken was evident. The body seemed slight, but ample for the poise and ministration of the exalted intelligence. Movement, speech and thought gave constant impression of a singular assurance and harmony. Utter kindness, even gaiety, pervaded all.

Quite naturally, I thought back for beginnings, and is it not notable that after a time I settled upon our Dr. Pisek, as carrying, more than any other personally known, the clear indications of the coming man—the racial hope; not in mass so much as in quality and adjustment.

Dr. Pisek won, aided, inspired and led us, and thousands of all classes, by virtue of this triune endowment, symmetry and harmonic balance, sensibilities of the keenest and truest, and an inexhaustible cheer and kindness. A few of these signal men and women are always about us presages of the future. When they drop alongside we begin to understand. We thus come at our friend; we see him now partially, as immured in Time and Fate, and wish our sons to grow up like him.

What a congruous and shapely man. None of our national self-making or self-madeness was apparent. He came made—as first met in the Medical School, laughing

down the corridor with the serious-looking Moorhead, thru groups of sombreness and doubt—all ready for life as it was in '94. He was born thirty-five years old and stayed so with the playfulness of youth, the will and constructive urge of midde-age, and the judgment and synthesis of senescence; age transformations lessen with the higher types. Such all-roundness of personality is very uncommon: investigator, teacher, author, builder, naturalist, woodsman, wit, comrade and ideal host and home-maker; with the humanities never scrimped. Indeed, a full harmonic life, made possible by a complete Osler-like entry with closed door, into every hour. Each morning was taken in the mood of Howell's fine last line of an obscure sonnet, "Well, anyhow it is another day"; or as another has written, "For this may be the white high day of life, the richest or the holiest or the last." There never came to him DeMaupassant's "Terrible middle-age from which one first foresees the end of the journey." How validly all ages early associated with him, from babe to patriarch—the mark of an advanced being.

Pisek's dauntless cheer and courage will perhaps be longest remembered of all. By sick-bed, in the troubled meeting or council, on the sweaty forest trail—everywhere, always he gave the half-humorous, heartening word or gesture that carried over. And in full self-knowledge of the crippled heart that was bound to shorten things, there is but one record of a brief depression—when he could not go with his old friends to the World War. The last of speech was a joke that eased and brightened a friend. He would not wish this occasion to pass without smiles. As we were near quitting, exhausted by night-and-day turmoils of a July hot-spell in hospital, he rallied us (I can see his haggard face) with quip and



parley, and we went on. "There are much hotter places, Brush, and doing well here may help keep you out of them"; then with a comical look at me—"doubtful." "Anyhow, this training will make you feel more quickly at home." This humor was an essential part of his armamentarium. He accomplished much with it, and it never hurt. Who can show a scar from Dr. Pisek? Could this be truly said of another here?

Much has been told of this man's goodness to the poor and distressed; but those nearest have hardly ever thought of it. There are two kinds of democrats—one who trains self to go down and about in aid of the less fortunate, and the other that never really knows distinctions. Both are good. Pisek was of the latter. Toads, trees, storm and sunrise, dirt, idiots, groping immigrants, lords and ladies, and the mass of average people were the texture of a glad life, and he reacted naturally with them all. This innate comradeship and counsel carried broadly from the sickly tenement to the inceptions of Czecho-Slovakia.

"Friend Godfrey" had a big living time—play, love, society, adventure, success, the sanities of beauty and art. We shall not subscribe to the cant that he died at the right moment. Twenty-five years more of his life were better than death, good as that is; his kind the United States needs—European proportionateness with American verve; portent of the Nobility which we are to form. But the castings of the shuttle are by unseeable hands, and precious life time may be wasted upon the query of the why.

There will be abundance of life after death for this superior man. It is pleasant to think that his very dust will give a richer tinting to the bloom, more gaiety to song and wing, and perchance sunsets of a deeper hue and longing. The perpetuation of off-

spring is assured and far-tending. But immeasurably greater than these is the sure immortality of influence, of personicity, extending ever outward thru his friends and his deeds. "Only life-waves last; trembling on thru myriad other circles of love and of will; merging at intervals in a passing life with doubled power, the lowering urn of being to refill."

Have we not met today to bear away into vibrant life some of these undying parts of our friend? Memorial ceremonies and monuments are justified only as they perpetuate the best, upon the living. Dr. Pisek would be pleased at all this today, and would smile and say to family and friends and to the thousands that knew and felt him: "Carry on—carry on!"

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## **"WELL DONE, THOU GOOD AND FAITHFUL ONE."**

BY

DR. S. ADOLPHUS KNOFF,

Formerly Professor of Phthisiotherapy of the  
New York Post-Graduate Medical School  
and Hospital.

Godfrey Pisek was born in the city of New York in 1873; he was graduated from the Academic Department of the New York University as Bachelor of Science in 1894 and from the Medical Department of the same University in 1897. After having finished his internship at the Post-Graduate Hospital he became visiting physician to the babies' wards of the New York Post-Graduate Hospital, the Park Hospital, the Willard Parker Hospital, and the St. Bartholomew's Hospital and later on, consulting pediatrician to the Union Hospital, Port Chester, N. Y., the Darrach Home for Children, and the New Utrecht Hospital. Dr. Pisek was a



member of the New York Academy of Medicine, the New York County Medical Society, American Medical Association, Society of the Alumni of Post-Graduate Hospital; president of the New York Post-Graduate Faculty Association, and Mutual Aid Society, and one of the founders and the first treasurer of the Alumni Association of the University and Bellevue Hospital Medical College. He was active in social work and was the honorary president of the Lenox Hill Settlement and a director of the John Huss Neighborhood House; also professor of diseases of children of the New York Post-Graduate Medical School and the University of Vermont. The latter conferred upon him the degree of Sc. D. in 1914. During the war he did valuable child welfare work.

Dr. Pisek was a frequent contributor to the medical journals in his specialty and on public health topics in general. His principal work was a textbook on Diseases of Children as co-author with Prof. Chapin, the fourth edition of which appeared in 1919. He was for many years an assistant editor of the *New York Medical Journal*. Dr. Pisek was considered one of America's most eminent specialists in pediatrics and had been connected with the New York Post-Graduate Medical School for many years as one of its most distinguished teachers. He was a most lovable man and companion and a most sympathetic physician who knew the art of winning children's hearts and confidence. Dr. Pisek will be long remembered by his countless colleagues, friends and pupils as well as by grateful parents whose children he restored to health and by us, his fellow alumni, his comrades, friends and co-workers, he will never be forgotten. Well may we say of him,

## "FEW HAD MORE FRIENDS."

From out the midst of life so full of work,  
Of love and service to mankind,  
He has been called away!  
Away from us, his comrades,  
And from those who loved him best  
As father, husband, and as friend;  
From those who were his pupils and his aides,  
Inspired by his devotion and his skill;  
From those who read his works  
And followed his advice  
When called the ills of children to assuage.  
These men, unknown to him,  
Are all his pupils and disciples still;  
They too will miss him and the spoken word  
Which was to them as to us here  
A constant help their courage to inspire.  
But sadder still it is that he must go  
From countless little children here  
That he himself had loved so much,  
To whom he gave his best  
As healer and as friend.  
How great a loss his going is to all!  
To those who saw him at the bedside,  
Gentle, kind, and almost saintlike thus,  
Dispensing succor and relief, recalling  
Vigor and the glow of health  
When death seemed near.  
He was so young, and yet  
Into one single score of years  
He crowded all the work of a long life,  
So that it seems he had been with us here  
For many a year ere yet his face we knew.  
Because of his achievements great  
His character and high ideals,  
Few had more friends  
Than he could count his own;  
Few had attained the same renown  
When still so young in years.  
The trust his colleagues gave was but his due,  
In mutual helpfulness he was their guide.  
And now he is no more, we say farewell to  
Godfrey  
Whose name means Peace with God.  
But is this parting final after all?  
Is he no more because his mortal form  
We can no longer see or touch?  
Did Johann Huss, the martyr, whom his father  
And himself as teacher in religion did accept,  
Who gave his life for truth and love  
And faith in God and man,  
Did he not show that life beyond the grave  
is real?  
That those who have passed on do never pass  
away?  
That in God's realm both love and labor  
Do continue for all those who served him well  
In this our earthly sphere?  
May we not ask of him, our Godfrey, now  
To send his love and inspiration from on high  
That we may live and work as he had done,  
That when the call for us shall come  
To go where he now dwells,  
An echo may be heard of what  
So surely is now said of him:  
"Well done, thou good and faithful one,  
Be blessed and enter thy reward."





